

New Hampshire Special Education Summary of Findings

**SAU 54, Rochester School Department
Five Year Monitoring and Improvement Project**

Project Period: 1995-2000

Report Date: June 28, 2000

*Report written By: Carolyn Woodman
Education Consultant, SERESC*

Summary of Findings
Rochester School Department
Five Year Monitoring and Improvement Project
June, 2000

The Rochester School Department became part of a five-year monitoring and improvement project following the issue of Orders of Compliance with Special Education Regulations in July 1995 by Elizabeth Twomey, New Hampshire Commissioner of Education. Ten areas of non-compliance were cited. The district was assigned a consultant from the Southeastern Regional Education Service Center to monitor progress toward compliance and to offer technical assistance.

Over the past five years of special education monitoring, several improvements in special education services have been seen. Corrections to meet the orders of compliance are outlined below. Numbered items are the original ten Orders of Compliance.

1. Documentation of the Referral Process

- Some schools have well developed building teams that meet and confer on any student who is having difficulty. They make referrals to the Special Education Teams as needed. This has resulted in more careful consideration of needs and strategies and less "automatic" referral for evaluation.
- Documentation of the referral process has improved with the use of standard forms.

2. Meeting timelines and writing evaluation summary reports.

- The District has hired new staff to meet the evaluation needs. This, in addition to the careful consideration of the need to evaluate, has resulted in fewer instances of evaluations being over time limits.
- Evaluation reports are observed to be generally present. Evaluation summary reports are also usually present, but sometimes are incomplete.

3. Qualifications of staff.

- The presence of qualified staff is an area that has shown dramatic improvement. Presently, staff are qualified for their positions or are in the process of obtaining certification.

4. Monitoring progress of IEP goals and objectives.

- The district is now generally in compliance on this order. If information is missing, it is generally because the person monitoring a section of the IEP has not transferred them to the child's confidential file.

5. Writing IEPs

- The District could benefit from additional assistance on writing IEPs and this has been frequently requested.
- Contents of Individual Education Plans are observed to be complete. Standardized forms have helped with this order.

6. Monitoring SPEDIS.

- The data for compliance with state standards is now entered electronically by the school district. Information about non-compliance is more readily available and easier to correct through this system. It also allows for access to comparative data.

7. Diplomas

- Policies at Spaulding High School have been revised for provision of diploma eligibility to all students. Previously, some students based on their participation in "skill level" study programs would receive a Certificate of Attendance in place of a diploma.

8. Provision of Least Restrictive Environment

- Spaulding High School is trying to develop a self-contained program for students with developmental disabilities as an extension from the middle school self-contained program. This will result in children with significant cognitive disabilities being able to attend a Spaulding High School program with their age mates instead of attending out of district placements.
- Collaboration has increased between vocational and special education departments at Spaulding High School.
- Special educators now attend department meetings at Spaulding High School in order to benefit from mutual consultation on curriculum and strategies to include students with educational disabilities.
- Some special education programs have moved from the basement level at Spaulding High School to the first and second floors.
- Efforts are being made to provide more inclusion at the middle school in conjunction with reducing the amount of self contained classrooms.
- The district has discontinued the placement of elementary school students who need substantially separate placement due to the severity of their educational disabilities and hours of service needed per day in district wide programs. Instead, beginning in the 1999-2000 school year, children are placed in their neighborhood school and special education and related services are provided there. (See Positive Negative~Interesting Chart for more information on the success of this project).
- The East Rochester School will be adding classrooms to house preschool special education services in addition to kindergarten. This will make way for five preschool children who now attend a separate program outside the district to move to an in district setting where they will be educated with typical peers and have access to the programs and services in the district.
- In addition to structural and staff changes, the District has also hired consultants to guide the development of in district programs. This has resulted in discussion and changes that have increased the capacity of the Rochester School District to provide programs for all children.

9. Documentation of extended school year.

- Documentation of consideration of extended school year is generally in place per file review.

10. Evidence of properly comprised evaluation/placement teams.

- Generally, files indicate compliance with team composition.

In addition to working toward correcting concerns of the original orders of compliance, the Rochester School District Special Education Services have made other improvements:

- Secretarial assistance to help with file organization and maintenance for out of district placements has helped to track and organize what are typically unusual or difficult to manage cases and therefore improve the condition of out of district files.

- The district is expanding five buildings to accommodate new kindergarten programs. This has the potential to improve the delivery of services as kindergarten children with special education needs can be served in regular kindergarten programs in the district. It also may result in earlier identification and intervention, and therefore better outcomes for children who may have educational disabilities.
- More professional development and paraprofessional education opportunities are available.
- Principals have taken on more of the responsibility for supervision of special education in their buildings. This change over the past few years has resulted in more attention to the way that special education becomes part of the school community and operations, and in closer management of compliance with special education regulations.
- Policy and procedures regarding special education have been developed, compiled and distributed to programs and buildings throughout the district.
- There are plans to hire a District Special Education Coordinator for the 2000-2001 school year to assist with compliance issues.
- Transition planning at each level of change in a child's program has been studied and improvements have been made. Some of the recent changes have a direct positive impact on transition. The addition of kindergarten will allow teachers in neighborhood schools to get to know children with educational disabilities as they grow and develop and will help them be better prepared to meet their needs. The system of providing services in neighborhood schools results in a child having a long-term community of educators and friends with which they feel comfortable. The development of programs that can monitor a child's progress over several years help with adjustment. Examples of this are the H.O.P.E. program which has the potential to serve children over both middle and high school years, depending on the child's needs, and the possible addition of a program for developmental disabilities at the high school that will be connected with the program at the middle school. Under these circumstances, transition is more likely to be a long term, well planned process rather than an event.

Remaining Concerns

The efforts of the Rochester School District to improve services to children with educational disabilities have been noticeable, ongoing, and rewarding. There are a few areas that continue to be a challenge, and those will need to have continued attention in order to maintain the positive momentum of improvement.

- Work on special education curricula would help organize and focus attention on the needs and goals of programs. While each child is an individual, with individual educational needs, this does not preclude the organizational and goal directed benefits of program design and improvement. There has been mention of the potential of the new Curriculum Coordinator being a resource for guiding teachers and supervisors in writing the curricula for their programs. This would also provide an opportunity to discover how special education curricula are related to regular education curricula. It will also help guide the development of modifications based on what the child will need for support in order to benefit from the regular curriculum. In short, the effort that is put into curriculum design may in the long run save steps in planning.
- There seems to be confusion and consternation about discipline policy regarding students with disabilities. In order to assist staff in understanding and interpreting the current law regarding discipline of students with disabilities, it is important to review the current standards, to update policy and procedures as needed in the district manual, and to distribute the District's policies and procedures regarding discipline to building administrators, coordinators, staff and other interested parties.
- The Rochester School District has seen uneven progress regarding efforts to provide in district services for middle and high school students who have severe emotional disturbance. During the first year of the five-year monitoring effort, the high school program closed in August of 1995 due to the District's inability to find qualified staff to replace teachers who had recently left the program. Consequently, many students were placed at the Sweetser School Day Program in Maine, and a variety of services, such as home programs, were put in place for students who remained un-served by the Spaulding High School Program. The next year saw a Spaulding High School Program with contracted services to manage the program. The classrooms for middle and high school students were located on the third floor of the high school in a comfortable suite of rooms. However, due to issues around program operations, staff, location, and discipline, the program closed and a new service provider, Strafford Learning Center, was contracted to develop and manage an in district program. For two years, the program continued in a location near the high school. Parent and student satisfaction and involvement increased and there was an ongoing connection with the Spaulding High School Administration. After two years, the Strafford Learning Center decided not continue with the project and the Rochester School District independently hired staff and a director and with the exception of one staff member, the program began the 1999-2000 school year with all new people, in the same location. The program, called H.O.P.E. is conditionally approved until June 30, 2000. It has not maintained the level of service that was previously seen and is in serious need of development and maintenance of policies, procedures, parent involvement, access to district curricula, and administrative connections to the Rochester Middle School and Spaulding High School. For more information on areas of concern with the H.O.P.E. program, please see the results of the program approval visit of May 2 and 3, 2000 contained in this report.
- Given the condition of services for seriously emotionally disturbed adolescents in the Rochester School Department, it is imperative that steps are taken immediately by Rochester Middle and Spaulding High School administrators and coordinators, district administrators, special and regular education staff, guidance counselors, Curriculum Coordinator, department heads, vocational services, and special education support staff to correct this situation and assure that students with emotional disabilities have appropriate services.

PNI (Positive~Negative~Interesting) Report

Regarding change from district program delivery of special education and related services to neighborhood school based services, September 1999.

Rochester, NH School Department
May, 2000

Information for this report was gathered during the spring of 2000 to see how the change from district programs centered in one or two elementary schools to providing services for children in their neighborhood schools. The results printed in the chart below are a compilation of comments from the surveys that went to Elementary Principals for feedback on how the process was working in their schools. Most items reflect a single response. Some were seen twice.

Positive	Negative	Interesting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students are in their home schools • "We are responsible for our own children" • "hours" are not inflated in the plan in order to justify placement in a different school • Personnel from two schools that had previously housed district programs appreciated the more reasonable ratio of special education students to regular education teachers and fewer aides per classroom. Classroom teachers had been charged with helping classroom assistants who were often inexperienced. • Positive comments about having the opportunity to share expertise, planning, skills with other teachers • Children have more access to typically developing peers. • One school does not have the majority of children with serious behavior difficulties. • There is more diversity in the classrooms. • Children are learning tolerance. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Children with mental retardation are not having their needs fully met. • There is a feeling that personnel may not be well enough trained to meet the needs of children in the neighborhood school • Programs do not necessarily address the children's weaknesses • The day may be too fragmented for some students who need consistency. • Scheduling has led to students not being grouped ideally • There is difficulty finding enough time for staff to meet, consult, and plan for meeting an individual special education needs and related services. • There are two sets of discipline procedures and standards for children who are disabled and non-disabled. • Putting more aides in a classroom to accommodate the needs of special education students is not always helpful • Scheduling special education services is a "nightmare" • It is difficult to work under two systems- pull-out programs and inclusion. • We are not truly an inclusive school environment • Feelings that more and better trained staff are needed to support the additional students with special needs that were formerly in district special education programs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There seems to be a better "feeling" in this building and there is more cooperation from special education staff who suggest helpful strategies to each other • Watching students prosper • "Children expressing happiness that they can play with classmates after school also (they live next door to each other)." • Did not see any significant changes. • More cohesive special education staff.

New Hampshire Special Education Summary Report

SAU 54 Monitoring and Improvement Project

**Dr. Raymond Yeagley, Superintendent
Ms. Sharon Prey, Special Education Director**

Project Period: 1995-2000

Report Date: June 28, 2000

Report written By: Carolyn Woodman, Education Consultant, SERESC

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Kathleen Melanson-Martin, Educator
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Claire Pstragowski, Youth Development Center
Patrice Robbins, LD Specialist
Margarite Thompkins, Preschool Special Educator
Paula Wensley, Special Educator

Individual School Review Summary Preschool Special Education
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Programs summarized in the review: *Preschool classrooms at MacClelland and Maple Street Schools*

COMMENDATIONS:

- There is a committed staff and supportive coordinator and the team works well together.
- The trans-disciplinary approach to learning is used effectively.
- It is a well-organized program with good staff to child ratios.
- Plans for a district wide kindergarten program and continuation of the preschool program at an in district site. Availability of new space also increases capacity to provide for children who are presently placed out of district.

CITATIONS: None

Suggestions:

- Develop a new system of file organization.
- Complete separate written prior notice forms when holding multiple meetings at the same sitting (evaluation/IEP/placement).

Notes from Interviews:

- Staff training provided through the Autism Institute and the Preschool Technical Assistance Network.

Individual School Review Summary

Allen Elementary

Programs summarized in the review: 1) Grade 2 Classroom 2) Grade 5 Classroom 3) Resource Room

COMMENDATIONS:

- The Principal is consistently part of the process by being the LEA representative.
- There is a Child Study Team to review referrals.
- There is a positive relationship between regular and special education staff.
- There is a strong concern for student welfare.
- There is technology [computer] access in each special education classroom.
- Flexibility that allows children to benefit from both inclusion and pull out programs.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1107.02	2 files did to have proper written notice and disposition of initial referral documentation 1 file did not show evidence of parents receiving procedural safeguards
Ed # 1107.08	1 file had no report of observation for re-evaluation
Ed # 1109.04	2 files were missing 10 day notice of IEP meeting 1 file was missing procedural safeguards notice
Ed # 1109.01	1 file was missing the IEP component that specifies how the educational disability affects involvement and progress in the general curriculum 2 files missing frequency and location of services and modifications 1 file missing the IEP signature There is a statement on the IEP that the student will not participate in standardized assessments but no statement of why the test is not appropriate, and there are not alternative assessment procedures listed
Ed # 1109.01	1 had no evidence of parental input
Ed # 1111.01	The extended school year process was completed on June 8 of the school year, which was not 60 days before the program started
Ed # 1109.03	The parent was not listed as part of the team for IEP and Placement
Ed # 1109.11	There was no evidence in the special education file of regular and systematic monitoring of the IEP. (Teacher in this case kept own file of monitoring documentation with her copy of the IEP and filed the reports yearly)
Ed # 1123.04	There was no public listing of names and positions to indicate who was able to access the files No record of disclosure in one file
Ed # 1123.05	Procedural safeguards did not appear to be given at each notification of IEP, and the initial and re-evaluation of the child

Individual School Review Summary

Allen Elementary, Continued

Suggestions:

- Staff noted that space was an issue.
- Special education/confidential files should be kept separate from the cumulative record in a file cabinet, section of the file cabinet, or section of the file. There should be a clearly visible access list so that it is clear who may have access to confidential records.
- A checklist of due process steps may help case managers organize the files and make sure that compliance is met.
- Secretarial/ clerical assistance could help with the organization and maintenance of the special education files.
- The special education checklist mentioned by the Principal would be helpful in documenting the presence of necessary signatures.
- Information gathered in the course of the onsite program review indicates that staff may need more consultation for developing successful strategies and programs for some of the children they work with.
- Team teaching was discussed but staff felt that the special education case load is too large at this time to use team teaching as a support for special education children in regular classrooms. There is some interest in pursuing team teaching for some, with technical assistance on implementing such a system.
- In one file that was reviewed, the child's IEP indicated that he would be in the classroom 75% of the time, but on interview it is indicated that he spends most of his time in the classroom. This change, though apparently a very positive one for the child needs to be reflected in an amendment to the IEP.

Suggestions from interviews:

- Additional computers would result in the addition of keyboarding and skill building programs.
- Look for ways to increase participation of children with special needs in after school activities, and to improve self-esteem.
- Look for ways to increase participation and communication with parents. Encourage email for this purpose.
- Consult with teachers at both levels when a child is making a grade to grade transition to determine the optimum amount of inclusion needed.
- There is some district wide inservice for paraprofessionals to take advantage of, but there seems to be a need to increase these even more.

<p style="text-align: center;">Individual School Review Summary Maple Street Elementary</p>
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Programs summarized in the review: 1. *Grade 2 classroom* 2. *Resource Room math*

COMMENDATIONS:

- The file of student special education records is extremely organized and in order.
- All extensions are clearly evident for evaluations.
- Speech and language goals are clearly aligned with the curriculum.
- Staff has seemed committed to inclusion and this has increased during the 1999-2000 school year. Collaborative planning between regular and special educators is noted.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1109.11 Progress not reported for one area of concern on the IEP.

Suggestions:

- It was mentioned that the building should be accessible to people with disabilities. However, currently there are no students who are physically challenged at the school.
- There are indications that additional supplies may be needed.
- The student's file that was reviewed states that he should receive 1/2 hour per week of counseling on an individual basis. The student only receives 1/2 hour pr month of individual counseling. The counselor is also providing services to the classroom 1/2 hour per week. Staff expressed the need for more counseling support due to growing needs. **Note:** *if the child's need for services are being met in the classroom, and the team wishes to change the intensity or type of services, there should be an amendment to the individual plan to document the change and parental permission for the change.*

Notes from interviews:

- Some paraprofessional training is available, but there seems to be a need for more.
- Curriculum materials are available, but there does not appear to be enough money for discretionary purchases.
- Would like to have more collaborative time among staff for planning and case review.
- School community relations seem to be a priority, and some would like to see them grow.

Individual School Review Summary East Rochester School
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Programs summarized in the review: 1. *Self-contained* 2. *Resource room*

COMMENDATIONS:

People were organized and innovative.
They worked a disadvantage (open concept) to their advantage.
Staff is sensitive to staff and student needs.
There is great character education program at the school.
Visiting author was present.
Excellent and innovative use of technology- well supplied with computers.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1125.00	1 file- consent to evaluate
Ed # 1107.06	2 files had no written summary report
Ed # 1107.07	1 file- could not find documentation that notification of determination of eligibility was given to parents.
Ed # 1109.04	2 files-procedural safeguards documentation not given with notice of IEP meeting
Ed # 1109.01	2 files-present levels of performance indicated but very generally
Ed # 1109.01(k)	1 file did not contain a statement of financial responsibility

Follow-up observations and interviews indicated that services that were specified on the IEP were being delivered to students.

Suggestions:

Implement a filing system, ideally system wide that specifies how special education/confidential files are organized.

Notes from Interviews:

- The East Rochester School has been able to develop and maintain a variety of placement options for its children.
- All classrooms have computers. The PTA has helped to provide software. Staff and students seem comfortable with using the computer and the internet access.
- Would like more space for itinerant specialists.

Individual School Review Summary East Rochester Annex

Programs summarized in the review: 1. *Resource room*

COMMENDATIONS:

Excellent example of a learning diad between a special education and regular education student observed.

Staff seem sensitive to student needs.

There seems to be a real sense of community.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1107.02(d) Written notice to parents of disposition of referral is missing

Ed # 1109.01 Statement of how disability affects involvement in the general curriculum is missing

Ed #1123.04(a,10) No record of disclosure in file

Ed # 1123.04(a, 7) No statement of who has access to the files

For the file reviewed, the student was receiving the services described in the IEP.

Suggestions:

Implement a filing system, ideally system wide that specifies how special education/confidential files are organized.

Notes from interviews:

- Related service providers need materials, locked cabinet for supplies, and provision of supplies and equipment by the district.
- One team member would like assistance with regulations for confidential file maintenance.
- More training sought for development of alternative programs and learning strategies and in use of computer assisted instruction.
- Good volunteer support.
- Dedicated staff, feeling of community, good student access to programs and activities.
- Regular educator would like to have more time to meet and confer with special education staff.

Individual School Review Summary Chamberlain School

Programs summarized in the review: 1. Max resource room, grades 1 and 2;
2. Max resource room grades 3,4,5.

COMMENDATIONS:

- Educators present as knowing student(s) very well, and their needs per IEP and daily work.
- Classroom teachers seem very familiar with IEPs.
- High degree of caring for students.
- New Principal is committed to improvements in services and paperwork.
- There was a high degree of cooperation between teacher, special educator, Physical therapist and the paraprofessional shown. They were very supportive of each other.
- Commitment to inclusive education.
- Staff know children well and seem very caring.

CITATIONS:

- Ed # 1107.03(a) 1 file did not have an LD certified teacher for the suspected disability of learning disability.
- Ed # 1107.03(a,b,c,d,i,l) 1 file-the student is out of compliance as evaluations were due by 1/99. The last evaluation summary was 1/95.
- Ed # 1107.05 (a,k) In one file, papers were not in the permanent record file. Meeting notes and evaluation reports were in the teachers working files.
- Ed # 1107.06 1 file did not contain a current occupational therapy and speech/language evaluation.
- Ed # 1107.07© Parent not at the determination meeting for whether or not the child continued to have an educational disability.
- In another file, there was an initial identification without an evaluation summary with the identification. Three years later, the identification was dropped with no evaluation or evaluation team meeting documented.
- Ed # 1109.03 Unclear. Parent not present at the meeting in one file where determination is made. LEA not designated.
- Ed # 1109.04(e-g) 1 file-parent was not present and there was no record of attempts made to arrange a mutually agreeable time and place.
- 1 file lacked documentation of a parent notice of an IEP meeting.
- Ed # 1109.01(a) Present, but in very general statements
- Ed # 1123.04(a) (7) There was no listing of who had access to special education files.

Individual School Review Summary

Chamberlain School, Continued

Ed # 300.346 (a,1) 2 files- no evidence of parent input, evaluations or testing. No documentation that NHEIAP or district wide testing results were considered.

Ed # 1115.06 2 files- evidence of parental input, evaluations or testing not shown.

Suggestions:

- Look for space for a special education room where space can be provided for specialists who travel between schools. Space is needed to work and to store materials.
- Consider laptop computers and new equipment and supplies for traveling specialists.
- Send out procedural safeguards with meeting notices, noting their enclosure on the notice and asking parents to sign and verify they received the safeguards with the notice.
- Multidisciplinary meetings with the Principal to review cases and needs.
- Have a separate file cabinet for special education files to distinguish them from regular education files.
- Assistance with coordinating and supporting services such as case management or secretarial help to assure that requirements are being met.
- Have IEP meetings throughout the year instead of the end of the year when possible.
- More detailed meeting notes for later reference.
- A system of documentation of contacts such as telephone logs.

Notes from Interviews:

- Suggest less reliance on pullout services for children in Max Resource rooms. Employ more problem solving to include the children with disabilities.
- More staff training to deal with behavior disordered or emotionally disabled children now that neighborhood children with these difficulties are being served at Chamberlain. May also need a structured program, depending on the needs of the children.
- Use of technology is increasing with positive results in the curriculum; teachers may need more training to match the children's enthusiasm.
- Would like to see increased participation in extra curricular activities for children with disabilities.
- Would like to see alternative methods other than special education be explored.
- Although training opportunities are acknowledged, there is a desire for more options both within and outside the district. Paraprofessionals and professionals indicated this.
- Repeatedly noted that finding appropriate space to implement programs is a challenge.
- Consultation from a specialist regarding functional behavioral plans was appreciated.
- Special education curricula needed.

Individual School Review Summary

Gonic School

Programs summarized in the review: 1. Resource room; 2. Primary special education

COMMENDATIONS:

- Excellent Inclusion within the building and across all grades.
- Committed and involved staff.
- Special needs students are totally part of the school and regular education classes for school functions.
- Involved Principal and support staff.
- Staff exhibits a high degree of flexibility that enables them to meet the needs of the students as their needs change.

CITATIONS:

Ed #1125.04(a)	2 files- unable to locate consent to evaluate. Evaluation reports in the file
Ed # 1107.02(b)	1 file- no referral paperwork
Ed # 1107.02(d)	1 file- no evidence of disposition of referral
Ed # 1107.07	1 file- no record of determination of educational disability after the last three year evaluation
Ed # 1109.01(a)	1 file- no present level of performance on the Individual Education Plan
Ed # 1109.01(n)	1 file missing the signature of the parent, legal guardian or surrogate parent on the IEP
Ed # 300.347(ii)	Statement that a child would not participate in the state wide assessment test was in the Individual Education Plan but no reason for non-participation was given
Ed # 1111.01	1 file-no evidence that extended school year was considered

Information from staff interviews, observations, interim reports, and IEP checks indicate that services that are being specified on the IEP are being provided.

Suggestions:

- Improve organization of files to make it easier to file and locate information.
- Special education files are located with regular education files. They need to be clearly separated.
- Annual Statement of Program (ASP) should be used only for consent for program, as it is difficult to determine with the present system what decision is being agreed to.

Individual School Review Summary

Gonic School, Continued

Notes from interviews and observations:

- Regular classroom teacher felt very included in the planning and monitoring process.
- More time for special educators and consultants is needed for regular educators.
- More training needed for classroom teachers and paraprofessionals. Dealing with behaviors that interfere with learning is a most needed topic.
- Generally, children with disabilities have good access to extra curricular activities. Additional activities and disability access for the music room are areas that need to be improved.
- Excellent participation by volunteers.
- New curriculum coordinator position for the district is seen as a boost to implementing curriculum changes.
- More computer access for children with special needs to help improve writing skills.
- School is improving effectiveness of teaching with the Harry Wong Program- the First Days of School, the District Education Improvement Plan and NEIAP Testing.

Individual School Review Summary McClelland School
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Programs summarized in the review: 1. Resource Room 2. Grades 2 and 5 classrooms

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff was open and responsive to the program approval process.
- Staff works well together to problem solve and collaborate.
- Principal is part of the special education process.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1107.02(d) 1 file had procedural safeguards from 6/11/98 as the most recent

Ed # 1107.07(c) 1 file- the LEA representative was present as indicated in the meeting notes, but this was not evident by looking at the sign in form on the front page of the meeting notes.

Ed # 1109.04 1 file- no documentation that procedural safeguards were given at each IEP meeting

Ed # 1109.11 1 file did not have progress reports for current year. Evidence of many parental conversations by telephone. Speech/language reports for the current year, but not in the special education file.

Ed # 1123.04(a)(7) Public listing of staff who have access to special education records is not available. There is a list but it includes all building employees including non-teaching staff.

Ed # 1123.05 1 file did not have evidence of annual notice of Parental Rights and Procedural safeguards.

Ed # 1125.03 Written prior notices contain more than one proposal on many occasions. While the notice is present, it may not be clear that the parents have agreed or disagreed with each proposal that was made.

Sources indicate that services that are specified are being delivered in the files that have been reviewed.

Suggestions:

- locate the special education files separately from the cumulative record and indicate clearly who has access to them
- provide additional training for paraprofessionals
- secretarial/clerical assistance for special education staff has been suggested as a way to increase student time
- IEP review/rewriting done throughout the year may relieve pressure on staff at the beginning and end of the school year.
- Organize files into a typical pattern for easy filing and access-one that is consistent throughout the school and ideally throughout the district, too.
- Look at lowering the caseloads for special educators.

Individual School Review Summary

McClelland School, Continued

Notes from Interviews:

- Students have nearly total access to the regular curriculum, with varying degrees of support to achieve it.
- Would like to classroom support, consultation and training of paraprofessionals increased.
- Would like to see more individual access to computers for children.
- Structured behavior plans are used to help children participate in classroom activities.
- Would like to see increased communication with parents and language that encourages participation.
- Regular and special educators would benefit from more training opportunities regarding due process, program options, modifications.
- Many children with disabilities participate in extracurricular activities; more encouragement may help increase their participation.

Individual School Review Summary Rochester Middle School
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Programs summarized in the review: 1. Grade 8 self-contained 2. Modified programs

COMMENDATIONS:

- The building special educator is doing a great job managing the middle school special education system and teaching.
- Plans for having one special education teacher per team for grade six.

CITATIONS:

- | | |
|--------------------|---|
| Ed # 1107.03(a) | The evaluation team does not include a regular educator, parent or Local Education Agency representative (or someone identified as the LEA representative). |
| Ed # 1105.05(k) | The evaluation was not completed within 45 days and no extension has been signed. |
| Ed # 300.504(a)(2) | No documentation of procedural safeguards given at notice of IEP meeting. |
| Ed # 300-346(iii) | State NHEIAP results do not appear to be included |
| Ed # 1109.03 | Team composition is not complete. LEA Representative does not Identify role. Regular education teacher not in attendance |
| Ed # 1123.04(a) | No record of disclosure in the files |

Discussions with staff as well as observations support the conclusion that services which are specified on the IEP are being delivered.

Suggestions:

- Update communication testing materials that are out of date.
- Rochester Middle School currently has six self-contained programs. Look for ways to create greater consistency in programming from one level to the other and to provide greater access to the general curriculum for all students.
- Special education space appears to be limited in some areas.
- Consider a review of the special education delivery system at Rochester Middle School. Look at increasing inclusion practices, team teaching and collaboration, and interdisciplinary curricula to provide better access to the general curriculum for all students.
- There is a need for more high interest/low reading level materials for all special education students.
- Teachers need more ongoing education about the needs of special education students, and how discipline procedures apply to special education (i.e., manifestation).
- If the team is considering dropping identification of educational disability, it is recommended that a certified person in the area of the disability being discussed be present at the meeting.

Individual School Review Summary Rochester Middle School, Continued

Notes from Interviews:

- Look at decreasing the caseloads for special educators.
- Look at decreasing the number of self-contained programs at the school by having special educators assigned to each team.
- Resource teachers may stay with the same grade level from year to year providing continuity and consistency of programs, which has had a positive effect.
- Would like to continue to expand the access to computers, and for special education students, the availability of adaptive devices such as touch windows.
- Transition activities seem important to parents; meetings are held for them. Would like to see more parent involvement in general.
- Ongoing education is important. Specific area of need is discipline and special education.
- School is involved in the Quality School Portfolio Data Manager.
- School is improving effectiveness of teaching based on how students learn through workshops such as one on Brain Research.
- All extra curricular options are open to special education students but would like to see more participation.
- There is a special education science class with its own curriculum suggested by teachers. It is in its second year, and is self-contained with seven students. It has its own curriculum that is closely aligned to the grade eight science curriculum.
- Offer more opportunity for ongoing, as needed training and technical assistance for educational assistants.

Individual School Review Summary School Street School

Programs summarized in the review:

- | | |
|----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1. Grade 2 classroom | 2. Grade 3 classroom |
| 3. Resource Room | 4. Physical education |

COMMENDATIONS:

- Staff works well together. There is frequent communication between regular education and special education providers.
- Staff are open to working with each others suggestions communicate their own suggestions and take parent and child feedback.
- Parental involvement in all parts of the special education process.
- Staff work together to use limited space for the best delivery of services possible to students
- Special education students are part of the services and activities provided to all students to the greatest extent possible.
- The Principal is part of the process, a member of the teams and supportive of the special education process.
- Staff will offer extra flexible help to each other and students as needed.
- Paraprofessionals are certified, respected, and part of the service delivery team.
- Files are well organized and complete.
- All are familiar with goals and objectives of the special education students.

CITATIONS:

- Ed # 1107.02 In one file, there was no written notice to the parents of the disposition of the referral within 15 days.
- Ed # 300.504 Procedural safeguards are not given at each notice of an IEP meeting; they are given at the IEP meeting. Interviews indicated that services stated in the IEP were being provided.

Suggestions:

- Look for space for a special education room where space can be provided for specialists who travel between schools. Space is needed to work and to store materials.
- Consider laptop computers and new equipment and supplies for traveling specialists.
- Send out procedural safeguards with meeting notices, noting their enclosure on the notice and asking parents to sign and verify they received the safeguards with the notice.
- Multidisciplinary meetings with the Principal to review cases and needs.
- Have a separate file cabinet for special education files to distinguish them from regular education files.

Notes from Interviews:

- Computer programs are very helpful in assisting a child with an educational disability in the regular education class. All students have equal access to computers and to the computer club
- In-district workshops are helpful.
- There is a homework club after school open to all students.
- Communication between home and school seems very good. Would like to see more education opportunities for parents.
- Small school offers a lot of staff communication opportunities; however more time with the special educators are needed for consultation. Would help to have consulting time built into schedules.

Individual School Review Summary Spaulding High School
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Programs summarized in the review: Special education programs - listed generally

COMMENDATIONS:

- The team of people working with the student whose file was reviewed was highly effective. His transition into the public high school has been a smooth one. His grades are excellent-making the honor roll, and he seems very well adjusted and happy. Teachers are satisfied with his performance and he has blended with his peers appropriately. He works well with his tutor and participates in group counseling.
- Progress that has been made in file maintenance and documentation of special education process.
- Progress that has been made in helping all students access the regular curriculum: a new diploma policy which assures that all student receive a diploma, and none are given a certificate of attendance due to the curriculum track that they participate in; increased interaction between special educators and regular educators on matters of curriculum modifications.

CITATIONS:

Ed # 1109.04 10-day notice of IEP meeting to parents is missing

Ed # 1113.01 Vocational evaluation being considered but is not done. ASVAB has been done. Currently without a vocational assessor for special education.

With the exception of the vocational assessment, indications are that the services specified on the IEP are being provided. In one case, the student is not accessing available support regularly.

Suggestions:

- Look at ways to assure vocational services follow-up. In one case, the student had had a vocational evaluation but vocational services had not been included yet.
- A primary concern of the visiting team was the space allotted for special education programs. Over the past few years, there have been programs moved from the basement special education area to upstairs classrooms with good results. The programs that remain downstairs would benefit from classroom partitions to decrease distractions both from other classrooms and from Spaulding High School Students traveling through the area from one part of the high school to the other. Of most concern was the proposal to place a new self-contained program in another basement area, as the location may be uncomfortable, dark, and isolating.
- Find ways to include the H.O.P.E. program in the curriculum access that has benefited SHS located special education students. Because the H.O.P.E. program is a district program, students in that program also need to have access to the regular curriculum and to the expertise of teachers who are certified in the subject that they teach.

Notes from Interviews

- Teams are starting transition discussions by age 14; area agencies are invited to do inservice training.
- Spaulding High School has the START program for students at risk; the Resource Support Center; and the HOPE Program for emotionally disabled students. Both the START program and the HOPE program are new this year.

Individual School Review Summary Placements outside the district
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Programs summarized in the review: Three files reviewed: one James O.,
one residential placement, one day placement

COMMENDATIONS:

The addition of assistance to help with file organization and maintenance has helped with tracking and organizing what are typically unusual or difficult to manage cases.

The district has many court placed as well as district place children in placements outside the district. They are, however, looking at ways to bring children back to district programs by increasing capacities of the district services through building expansion, addition of a kindergarten program, and consultation to in district programs on program organization and improvement. Five preschool children, for instance, will be coming from a substantially separate program outside the district to an in district setting where they will be educated with typical peers and have access to the programs and services that the district provides. There have been efforts to strengthen a program for children with emotional handicaps through consultation and recommendations of an outside agency.

CITATIONS:

- 1107.05(k) Signature date is 1/4/00; report date is 3/23/00; no record of evaluation team meeting.
- 1107.06(a) Evaluation team report is partially completed
- 1107.07c No record of team meeting; composition of the team could not be checked.
- 1107.03 Unable to determine from documents if the Principal or LEA rep attended
- 1109.11 Evidence of systematic monitoring, but not for the current year with the child being in another district
- 1111.01(e)(l) No record of ESY being considered for current year. Although this may have been done in the district that the child attends it was not documented in the file. It is documented for the 1998-99 school year.
- 1125.04 One file did not contain written consent to evaluate for 97-98 or for current evaluations being done at the residential placement. Although the permissions may be in effect at the current placement, they need to also be present in the student's file at the district.
- 1107.03(1) The parent has signed on a 6/21/99 Annual Statement of Placement form. On the top of the form, there is a handwritten word, "Evaluations". This may have been the evaluation permission form, but it is difficult to determine if the parents' signature indicated that they were in agreement with an evaluation decision or giving permission to evaluate.
- 1107.07c No record of evaluation team meeting

<p align="center">Individual School Review Summary Placements outside the district, Continued</p>
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Ed # 1109.04	No documentation of procedural safeguards being given at each notice of an IEP meeting. Documentation that they are given in other meetings is present, however, except for a meeting that was held as a teleconference
Ed # 1109.04(d)	No documentation that there is need to consider transition services
Ed # 1109.01(l)	No statement of transition needs and services
Ed # 1109.03 (c,d)	No documentation that steps to insure that the child's interests were taken into account, or that other agencies were involved in planning.
CFR 300.347(c)	No record of a transfer of rights statement; there is however documentation of a court document giving the parent rights of guardianship for the student
CFR 300.307(a)(5)	No statement of participation in school wide assessments
Ed # 1107.05(k)	Evaluation is not conducted within 45 days
Ed # 1109.04	It is not clear that procedural safeguards are given with the notice of the IEP meeting
Ed # 1109.01	Statement of parties assuming financial responsibility is missing
CFR 300.346	No evidence that NHEIAP or district wide testing results are considered
Ed # 1109.11	Documentation of monitoring of the IEP present for 12/1/99 and 12/17/99 only

Suggestions:

- Look at ways to assure vocational services follow-up. In one case, the student had had a vocational evaluation but vocational services had not been included yet.
- A primary concern of the visiting team was the space allotted for special education programs. Over the past few years, there have been programs moved from the basement special education area to upstairs classrooms with good results. The programs that remain downstairs would benefit from classroom partitions to decrease distractions both from other classrooms and from Spaulding High School Students traveling through the area from one part of the high school to the other. Of most concern was the proposal to place a new self-contained program in another basement area. There is concern that the location may be uncomfortable, dark, and isolating.
- Find ways to include the H.O.P.E. program in the curriculum access that has benefited SHS located special education students. Because the H.O.P.E. program is a district program, students in that program also need to have access to the regular curriculum and to the expertise of teachers who are certified in the subject that they teach.

NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION

SPECIAL EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL SUMMARY REPORT
May 22, 2000

PROJECT H.O.P.E.
(Handling Our Problems Effectively)
ROCHESTER SCHOOL DISTRICT
SAU# 54

Request for Program Approval
Visit Conducted on May 2, 2000

Team Members: Jane Bergeron-Beaulieu, Title
Michael Noonan, School Psychologist, SAU#54

**NEW HAMPSHIRE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
PROGRAM APPROVAL VISIT
PROJECT H.O.P.E.
(Handling Our Problems Effectively)
ROCHESTER, NH
SAU#54**

INTRODUCTION

The Rochester School District is seeking special education program approval for an off site alternative special education program for middle and high school students identified as having emotional or learning disabilities. The request is made for an enrollment of 15-18 students (male and female) ages 12-21. The brochure and materials submitted as part of the application describe a program that houses a high school and middle school classroom with a curriculum designed for short term placements. The program is further described as having an emphasis upon violence prevention, life space crisis intervention, work-based instruction and an affiliation with several businesses within the Rochester community. Promotional materials further note that Project HOPE is designed to provide a spectrum of prevocational experiences closely aligned with a traditional classroom curriculum.

On May 3, 2000, a New Hampshire Department of Education Special Education Program Approval visit was conducted at Project HOPE. The purpose of the visit was to observe the program, review student records and meet with staff to discuss the various aspects of the curriculum, behavior management and instruction that is provided to students. The visiting team was favorably impressed with the cooperation of the staff, students and administration during this visit. Personnel were repeatedly described as committed, caring and well intentioned. As the visiting team carried out their duties, several issues of significance became apparent; all of which require immediate attention.

The review team found Project HOPE to be a program lacking direction and leadership. The program has no clearly defined philosophy, no admission or discharge criteria and no curriculum as a base for instruction. It was also apparent that the program lacks adequate materials, supplies and equipment to implement individual education plans, and that students do not have access to equal educational opportunities as outlined in the NH Minimum State Standards. Staff was not aware of any budget allowances, little to no material is provided by the Rochester middle or high schools and there is no technology available to the program.

IEPs reviewed were not reflective of the services provided to the students in the HOPE Program and there was no consistent documentation of student progress as related to IEP goals and objectives. All of the IEPs reviewed were lacking essential components including transition plans, goals and objectives related to the programming students were receiving. Staff had little knowledge of individual student goals and it was apparent that teachers do not utilize IEPs in the design and delivery of educational programming. At the time of the visit, staff could not articulate or provide written curriculum or course of studies used by the program. It was further noted that the practices being utilized for behavior management are not clearly identified; there is no protocol for time out, restraint and processing opportunities for students.

Overall, it was the opinion of the visiting team that there is a need to strengthen and enhance all aspects of Project HOPE and that SAU# 54 falls short in meeting special education compliance requirements.

CITATIONS OF EXCEPTANCE TO THE NEW HAMPSHIRE STANDARDS FO THE EDUCATON OF STUDENTS WITH DISABILITIES and IDEA 1997 FEDERAL REQUIREMENTS

Ed. 1109.01 Individual Education Plan

Ed. 1109.10 Accountability for Achievement of IEP'S

3 files reviewed: IEP's did not accurately reflect the services currently provided to students.

CFR 300.347(A)(4) Extent of Participation with Non Disabled Peers

3 files reviewed: IEP's lacked sufficient evidence of an explanation of the extent that the student participls with non-disabled peers.

CFR 300.347(a)(5) Statewide Assessments

Student records do not provide evidence that attending students participate in statewide assessments. Staff verifies that no plans are in place for administration of such testing.

CFR 300.347(a)(7) Progress

3 files reviewed: IEP's had no statement of how progress would be measured and how parents will be informed of student progress.

Ed. 1111.01 Extended School Year Programming

3 files reviewed: Contained no documentation of consideration of extended school year programming. Staff had no knowledge of extended school year for any students and indicated there have been no meetings to discuss eligibility for summer programming.

Ed. 1109.11 IEP Progress

3 files reviewed: Lacked evidence of regular/systematic monitoring of the IEP. Report cards were available, yet they had no direct connection to IEP goals and objectives.

CFR 300.534 Special Education Process

Ed. 1107 Evaluation and Determination

Ed. 1109 The Individualized Education Program

Ed. 1115 Placement of Students with Educational Disabilities

Teachers at the HOPE Program are not involved in IEP development or placement decisions. The IEP is not used as a reference tool in the development of curriculum and lesson planning.

Ed. 1119.06(a) Location of Program

Ed. 1111.01 Least Restrictive Environment

Ed. 1115.04 Continuum of Alternative Education Environments

The HOPE Program is not located in a building with students of similar chronological age. Students enrolled do not have the opportunity to interact with typical peers.

Ed. 1113.01 Vocational Education

CFR 300.26(b)

CFR 300.347(b,1)

Program materials indicate numerous vocational and pre-vocational opportunities within the HOPE Program and the community. At the time of the review, no such programming is available to enrolled students.

Ed. 1119.03 Curricula

CFR 300.26(b)(3)

There is no defined curriculum within the HOPE Program and student do not have full access and equal educational opportunities to the districts full middle and secondary curricula, including vocational training.

Ed. 1119.04 Equipment and Materials

HOPE Program staff do not have adequate materials, supplies and equipment to provide services as outlined in student IEPs. The HOPE Program does not have the necessary technology to implement programming and services to the students enrolled.

Ed. 1102.35 Transition Planning

CFR 300.347(b)(1)

None of the IEP's reviewed contained a transition component.

Ed. 1119.11 Suspension of Students with Disabilities

The HOPE Program has no defined policies related to suspension of students or discharge from the program. It was reported that students can be "dismissed" from school for two or three days, but they are not suspended.

Ed. 1119.07 Qualifications of Service Providers

Special educators at the HOPE Program are expected to provide instruction in all content areas. No consultation is provided to the HOPE program by staff who holds certification in the academic content areas, as well as unified arts. (i.e. art, music, PE, health, technology, English, math, science, etc.).

Ed. 1115.07 Provision of Non Academic and Extra Curricular Services for Students with Disabilities

Students in the HOPE Program report they are not eligible to participate in non-academic and extracurricular activities at the middle or high school. Participation with typical peers in clubs, dances, sports at the middle and high school must be earned.

Ed. 306.10 Policy Development

The HOPE Program does not have a written procedure outlining policy relative to student discipline, including student rights and responsibilities, rules of conduct, penalties for misbehavior, methods for suspension, physical restraint, time out policies and training made available to staff in the area of behavior management.

Ed 306.13 First Aid and Emergency Care

The HOPE Program has no written procedures for staff to follow for the purpose of emergency care for students and school personnel who sustain injury or illness during school hours.

SUMMARY

Overall, it is the opinion of the visiting team that there are significant issues of noncompliance at Project HOPE which impedes the opportunity for students with disabilities to have access to equal educational opportunities within their program. The teachers in the HOPE Program are enthusiastic and committed to improving services provided to the students and they are open to suggestions for improvement. In proceeding toward the goal of approval by the New Hampshire Department of Education, it will be necessary that Project HOPE resolve the citations outlined above and that SAU# 54 provide evidence that all requirements have been met.

The visiting team would like to thank the staff at Project HOPE for their cooperation and for their hospitality throughout the course of the program review visit. Please be aware that this summary is being forwarded to Mr. Terry Brune, Education Consultant at the New Hampshire Department of Education for further action.